

#13

Testimony
House Education Reform Committee
May 25, 2017

Mary Anne Ramer
50401 Nantwich Drive
Macomb, MI 48044

My name is Mary Anne Ramer and I am a survivor of meningitis and rubella, a mother of two children who have had vaccine-preventable diseases before the vaccines to prevent them were developed, a grandmother of two fully-vaccinated young boys, and a Certified Pediatric Nurse at Beaumont Health. This fall I start the Primary Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Doctorate of Nursing Practice program at the University of Michigan.

I speak to parents regularly about my first-hand experiences with now-vaccine-preventable diseases when urging them to reconsider refusal or vaccine spacing. I tell them about the fear I had as a parent watching my child lying limply in my arms not reacting when they started the IV. I tell them about the recurrent pulmonary complications she has had since that time with exercise-induced asthma, sensitivity to dust, pollen, and smoke, and greater complications from upper respiratory infections.

I tell them about having meningitis and how it was literally the worst pain I have ever felt (and I've delivered four children.) I tell them that it was only because I was moaning in pain in my sleep and woke up my husband that I got to the hospital in time to prevent the worst complications.

Educated parents make educated choices and the mandatory waiver education has proven that with a 36% drop in unvaccinated children. We never removed parental choice, but only made sure it was an *educated* choice. We don't let 16-year-olds on the road without driver's education so why would we let young parents make decisions that affect their child's lives without ensuring that they are properly educated about this as well?

Additionally, quarantining those who are at risk for spreading infectious diseases has been the mainstay of reducing the spread of those diseases since the study of virology began. To roll back those advances in medical knowledge has led to the recent outbreaks in measles and whooping cough, which were once eradicated! We regulate the training and licensing of plumbers and electricians, licensing of gas station pumps, and operation of farmer's markets, but want to deregulate the authority of the Health Department to prevent a modern-day Typhoid Mary from beginning the latest epidemic! To what end does that serve?

I urge you all to vote NO on HBs 4425 and 4426. They do not promote healthy choices. They do not prevent the spread of disease. But most of all, they are *not* in the best interest of the people you represent.